



Lightning is one of nature's most awe-inspiring and dangerous phenomenon. The average lightning flash could light a 100-watt light bulb for more than 3 months! The temperature of a lightning bolt may reach **50,000 degrees Fahrenheit** which is hotter than the surface of the sun!

On average, **lightning kills one person in Kansas per year, and about 73 Nationwide**. Although there were no lightning casualties in Kansas for 2003, there have been 60 fatalities and nearly 200 injuries documented in Kansas since 1959. Lightning remains one of the most deadly weather phenomena in the US, and it can occur almost anywhere throughout the entire year. Many people incur injuries or are killed due to misinformation and inappropriate behavior during thunderstorms. A few simple precautions can reduce many of the dangers posed by lightning. **Remember, Lightning Kills, Play it Safe!**

AVOID being in or near:

High places and open fields, isolated trees, unprotected gazebos, rain or picnic shelters, baseball dugouts, communication towers, flagpoles, light poles, bleachers (metal or wood), metal fences, convertibles, golf carts, water (ocean, lakes, swimming pools, rivers, etc.).

When inside a building AVOID:

Use of the telephone or computer, taking a shower, washing your hands, doing dishes, or any contact with conductive surfaces with exposure to the outside such as metal door or window frames, electrical wiring, telephone wiring, cable TV wiring, plumbing, etc.

If driving:

Stay in your automobile. An enclosed automobile offers reasonably good protection from lightning, as long as you don't touch metal.

Generally speaking, if an individual **can see lightning or hear thunder he/she is already at risk**. Louder or more frequent thunder indicates that lightning activity is approaching, increasing the risk for lightning injury or death. If the time delay between seeing the flash (lightning) and hearing the bang (thunder) is less than 30 seconds, the individual should be in, or immediately seek a safer location.

When available, pay attention to weather warning devices such as NOAA Weather Radio and credible Lightning Detection Systems. NOAA Weather Radio and local weather forecasts should be monitored prior to any outdoor event to ascertain if thunderstorms are in the forecast. Designate a responsible person to monitor potentially hazardous weather as well as to observe on-site developments to keep everyone informed when threats develop. **Most importantly, use good common sense** if living in or traveling across Kansas this year.

Again in 2004, the National Weather Service, and other agencies, will sponsor **Lightning Safety Awareness Week June 20 - 26**. During the week various aspects of lightning and lightning safety will be highlighted. More information can be found at this national web site:
<http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov/>